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This summary of consultative discussions is not intended to represent a definite study of the topic, but rather a beginning. Four general guidelines of themes emerged from the seminar regarding vocational education for persons with special needs: (1) Professional vocational education personnel must become more concerned with people and less concerned with program, (2) Vocational education has far more to offer persons with special needs than any other area, particularly a traditional liberal arts course of study, (3) Teachers of persons with special needs should be individuals who receive intrinsic satisfaction from working with the disadvantaged and are not bound by tradition, and (4) Persons with special needs generally migrate less than individuals who have achieved higher levels of education. Guidelines are provided in the areas of: (1) characteristics of persons with special needs, (2) characteristics of the Negro sub-culture and the additional problems of this group, (3) guidelines for teacher education programs, and (4) guidelines for programs for persons with special needs. These are general or working guidelines and will be revised, reworked and rewritten as vocational educators increase their knowledge and understandings of persons with special needs. (MM)

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GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS DEVELOPED FROM THE SEMINAR FOR SUPERVISORS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS OF TEACHERS OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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WORKING GUIDELINES

For Professionals Working With Persons With Special Needs

This paper is a summary of the consultative discussions of the seminar focusing on persons with special needs. It is labeled "working guidelines" because it is not intended to represent a definitive study of the topic, but rather a beginning. Because of this nature, these working guidelines will be discussed, revised, re-worked, and re-written as vocational educators increase their knowledges and understandings of persons with special needs. The thinking contained in this paper is the product of the seminar consultants, participants, and staff.

Prior to a presentation of the outcomes of the seminar one should review its objectives:

1. Bring to the attention of persons involved in preparing teachers for vocational education programs the problems, differences, and strengths among persons who have academic, social, economic, and other handicaps which prevent them from succeeding in the regular vocational education program.
2. Recognize the cultural systems, value systems, and personality systems of persons with special needs.
3. Explore techniques for conceptualizing the problems of persons with special needs.
4. Experience through participant observation the social situation of persons with special needs.
5. Establish the concept that special methods and materials are necessary in designing effective vocational programs for persons with special needs.
6. Explore the possibilities in program development to serve persons with special needs.
7. Emphasize the contribution that vocational guidance can make in assisting the problems of disadvantaged youth and adults.
8. Discover feasible means of recruiting potentially effective teachers.
9. Explore possible administrative organizational procedures for adapting educational programs for persons with special needs.
10. Develop techniques for working with the leadership of local school systems in implementing programs for persons with special needs.
11. Explore ways of working with the leaders of community institutions, organizations, agencies, special committees, and others.
12. Develop "working guidelines" to assist supervisors and teacher educators in program planning and implementation. (Guidelines will be disseminated to all persons having interest in developing vocational education programs for persons with special needs as well as having responsibility in this area.)
13. Recognize the contribution that successful programs for persons with special needs can make to such individuals and to society.

From the many activities of the seminar four general guidelines or themes regarding vocational education for persons with special needs emerged. The first and perhaps the most important theme to emerge was that professional vocational education personnel must become more concerned with people and less concerned with program. This is not to infer that program is unimportant, as programs for persons with special needs are a major objective of those working in the area. However, vocational educators presently possess the necessary techniques and skills of program development. What appear to be needed are such essential elements of program as form and content.

Ideally, program form and content should be based upon the needs of the student. To ascertain needs, program developers must fully understand the cultural, social, and personality systems of persons with special needs. If this understanding is not achieved, the needs (physical, psychological, social, etc.) of these people will remain hidden, and therefore program development will be inadequate. It is obvious that traditional vocational education programs have not met the needs of disadvantaged youth and adults, since many of them have experienced failure in this system. Thus, the emphasis on people rather than program emerged from the seminar proceedings.

The second general guideline or theme to come from the seminar proceedings was that vocational education has far more to offer persons with special needs than any other area--particularly the traditional liberal arts course of study. It provides two effective avenues of attack to the problem. The very nature of vocational education courses appeals to the materialistic and immediate gratification value orientations of disadvantaged youth and adults. When vocational education provides opportunities for individuals to produce tangible products, the disadvantaged learner is engaging in activities consistent with his value system. Thus, school is no longer a foreign hostile environment.

Another avenue of attack is the vocational teacher. For he is the individual who is willing to give up traditional academics in order to communicate with persons with special needs. Perhaps the vocational teacher will be the teacher who can teach the English, mathematics, etc. that disadvantaged youth and adults need. Thus, the future of many persons with special needs resides with the professional personnel of vocational education.

The third general guideline or theme related to teacher preparation. Teachers of persons with special needs should be a "special kind of people;" individuals who receive intrinsic satisfaction from working with the disadvantaged--those individuals who are not bound by tradition. Teacher preparation, both pre-service and in-service, needs to include more courses in the social sciences, special education, and even field work involving persons with special needs. The regular classroom teacher would also benefit from special training for he may at any time become part of a teaching team or instrumental in the referral of

special needs students to assistance.

The fourth general guideline or theme to come from the seminar proceedings was that persons with special needs generally migrate less than individuals who have achieved higher levels of education (i.e., as educational level increases--mobility increases).[9] If they do migrate, the distances traveled are shorter than for the higher educated. This is of particular importance to program planners for it suggests that specific job training courses for persons with special needs can be based on those jobs that are in the immediate geographic vicinity.

As stated in the first general guideline of this paper, there is a need for vocational educators to increase their knowledge about and understanding of persons with special needs. Today one can find volumes of literature relating to persons with special needs, and the serious student has no doubt become familiar with many of these works. Since a comprehensive coverage of persons with special needs is beyond the scope of this report, selected guidelines which have pertinent relevance for vocational education are presented below.

1. Guidelines on the Characteristics of Persons With Special Needs

   a. Youth with special needs, especially those residing in depressed rural areas, consider themselves adults by the time they reach their teens. Thus by the time most of these youth enroll in vocational programs they feel they are ready to go to work, marry, etc; school is "kids' stuff." In other segments of society, particularly the middle class, this adolescent period functions to prepare youth for adulthood. As a result, this self-concept perpetuates youth with special needs--youth inadequately prepared to function in the existing technological society.
   b. Persons with special needs are oriented to the present as opposed to the future--to getting-by versus getting-ahead. Almost all family resources are used to provide the necessities: food, housing, and clothing. Planning for the future is almost non-existent--for there is nothing to plan with. Thus, educational offerings that will be useful ten years from now, is a concept that is meaningless to these persons and most often rejected. This orientation of immediate gratification is inherent in the value structure of disadvantaged youth and adults and one that must be fully understood by educators.
   c. The environment of youth with special needs lacks stimuli that develop verbal, cognitive, and perceptual skills; and

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[9]This is not to infer that persons who migrate from depressed rural areas to urban areas aren't sometimes persons with special needs in their new locations; however, these rural migrants generally represent the more able persons from the original base locale.

these are essential skills for success in the traditional educational system. Since significant adults in this environment have often achieved a minimal amount of education, they are frequently unable to read to their children, answer questions for them, etc., all which help to develop these skills. Thus, the disadvantaged learner often learns slowly, but is not a "slow learner." He often possesses a high ability to learn. The skills necessary for learning are what they are lacking. He needs to know how to learn, as well as have an opportunity to practice learning (i.e., a stimulating environment).

d. Congruent with the value system, the life style of persons with special needs reveals an emphasis on the pragmatic and materialistic. Concrete objects and situations are highly valued. This characteristic of the value system is also transferred to the educational system. Practical and useful (pragmatic) educational endeavors are consistent with the value systems of persons with special needs and are thus more highly valued. Thus, concrete and practical rewards often serve to motivate learning; concrete learning situations (manipulation of objects, educational media) often provide intrinsic motivation.

e. Most disadvantaged persons value education. They feel that they "must have an education" in order to attain the things they do value (a good job and numerous materialistic items). In other words, they value its practical significance. On the other hand, they do not value "school." They view school as "offering nothing," and thus, it becomes a constant source of frustration. The traditional academic orientation of the school does not relate to the "real world"--as the disadvantaged view it.

f. Most disadvantaged youth desire to improve their situation, and thus have goals for achieving a stable occupation.

g. The disadvantaged student learns through a concrete approach--less emphasis on abstraction, fewer concepts, emphasis on the manipulation of objects, etc.

h. The parents of disadvantaged youth are often poor models. They are frequently out of work or engaged in occupations that will not exist for the next generation.

i. Maintaining status within his peer group is often one of the most important factors influencing and/or motivating the learning of students with special needs. Becoming an "egghead" would immediately isolate the disadvantaged youth from his peers.

j. Disadvantaged youth and adults feel alienated from society and view life as a situation where there are no alternatives. They feel they are powerless in controlling the outcome of events that make up their lives.

k. Disadvantaged youth are often very creative--especially when compared to middle class youth. Middle class youth generally

conform and follow rules and thus lack creativity. On the other hand, the disadvantaged youth's creativity is often channeled in a socially unacceptable way, such as delinquency.

l. The mother is the most meaningful (and many times the only) figure in disadvantaged families. This indicates that notions of change, aspiration, motivation, etc., should be fed through her.

m. The people of depressed rural areas emphasize kinship relationships. Loyalty to the family takes precedence over all other segments of the population. Thus, all of society's other institutions-school, government, etc., are often viewed as a threat to the traditional family functions.

n. The social institutions (education, government, religion, family, etc.) of depressed rural areas reflect and also tend to perpetuate the existing situation.

o. Persons residing in depressed rural areas frequently lack the knowledge of employment opportunities in and an understanding of the functioning of modern technological society.

p. Persons with special needs are generally characterized by physiological problems (i. e., inadequate diets, infected teeth, upper respiratory infections from living in crowded conditions). These problems are directly related to interest in school and learning.

Special attention was given to the topic, racial discrimination, and its implications for programs for persons with special needs. Although there are other racial groups in the United States that are the targets of discrimination, the Negro and his subculture was the topic of major concern during the seminar. The following guidelines relate to the characteristics of the Negro subculture and the additional problems this group faces.

a. Many Negroes are ill-equipped to take advantage of emerging opportunities in a desegregated economic and social structure.

b. The Negro subculture is characterized as follows:

(1) A subculture of restriction and frustration.

(2) A subculture of fear, anxiety, and suspicion; for example, a fear of police and election officials; anxieties created over such uncertainties as where to eat, sleep, swim, etc.; suspicion of whites who do not pay them the minimum wage, or sell them an insurance policy they can't read.

(3) A subculture of poverty and illiteracy.

(4) A subculture of real and symbolic inferiority:

(a) Real: Survey-data collections show that Negroes fall below whites on every criterion--test scores, health, income, etc.

(b) Symbolic: Compare the connotations of black and white

(5) A subculture of accomodation and apathy; for example, go along with the white power structure--don't cause trouble.

c. The above mentioned subculture results in the production of individuals who have poor self-concepts.
d. Individuals participating in this subculture are often characterized by a negativism to learning.

(1) Desegregated schools pose a real social threat to the Negro children. They fear rejection by the non-Negro portion of the school population.
(2) Often he is afraid to excel his white classmates.
(3) A "failure-threat" is often with the Negro student--a feeling that he will stigmatize his whole race if he fails. Thus many do not apply themselves to school work so they will have a reason for failure. On the other hand, those students who do apply themselves are often under such extreme pressure that they are unable to perform well.

e. The most significant factor affecting student achievement is the socio-economic status of the family. (The research producing this information used educational attainment as the measure of socio-economic status.)
f. The second most significant factor affecting student achievement is the socio-economic status of his peer group. That is, where the majority of the classmates of lower class Negro students is from the middle class, achievement is greater.

2. Guidelines for Teacher Education Programs

Essential to the realization of successful programs for persons with special needs are quality teachers. Likewise, essential to the development of quality teachers are quality teacher education programs--both pre-service and in-service. In order to develop adequate teacher education programs, college and university staffs must be cognizant of characteristics of successful teachers of persons with special needs.

Teachers of persons with special needs must:

a. Have a deep commitment to and respect for these people.
b. Have a thorough knowledge of the environment in which these people live, the values they hold, and their perceptions of society as a whole. (The preceding guidelines only mentioned a few of these.)
c. Realize that existing testing instruments are not "culture free" and generally provide inaccurate assessments of the ability of these people.
d. Be competent in the subject matter of his field.
e. Have the ability to modify existing course outlines, units,

etc. (which are prepared for middle class students) so they will appeal to the physical, concrete learning style of these people.

f. Not stereotype these students as low-achievers because of their slower learning style.
g. Have the ability to construct concrete materials for work in the classroom.
h. Realize that an important part of his work is to modify behavior.
i. Promote extra-curricular activities, for they provide a means of developing good human relationships and teaching ethical behavior.
j. Have the ability to detect special problems (reading, health, speech, emotional, etc.) and to make the proper referral.
k. Provide an environment that makes it easy and interesting to learn.
l. Not interpret a student's feelings of inferiority and subordination as unmotivated behavior.

In order to provide the quality teachers, teacher education institutions must construct a course of study that will enable potential teachers to develop the above characteristics.

Such a course of study would include:

a. Courses oriented to the general characteristics of persons with special needs--including such characteristics as values, socio-economic styles, behavioral patterns, etc.
b. Several courses in anthropology and sociology. (Those courses which concentrate on the analysis of various cultures and subcultures. The teacher of persons with special needs must employ the techniques and skills and especially the frame of reference of the social scientists in developing an understanding of her students.)
c. Opportunities for instruction in the construction of concrete classroom instructional materials.
d. Opportunities for potential teachers to learn how to modify existing course outlines, units, etc., to the concrete learning style of persons with special needs.
e. Special courses in the detection and referral of special problems of students (speech, reading, emotional, health).
f. Opportunities to do supervised work (i. e., teacher's aide, etc.) as well as student teaching with persons with special needs.
g. Special instruction in the validity of intelligence test scores and other testing problems of persons with special needs.
h. Opportunities to learn what public and private community agencies are available to assist persons with and programs for persons with special needs.

3. Guidelines for Programs for Persons with Special Needs

First, it should be recognized that programs for persons with special needs represent an expansion of the total vocational education program and not a reduction in the standards of program. Thus, if thoughtfully and carefully planned, programs for persons with special needs can greatly assist in improving the image of vocational education. Such programs will focus on a segment of the population that has been inadequately served by the entire educational system.

Although programs for persons with special needs are gradually increasing and most of them are quite successful, it is difficult to generalize what the components of success are because each has many unique features. Such basic questions as: To what extent should these programs (therefore the students) be isolated from the regular school program? A complete facility on a site away from the parent school? A complete program in a comprehensive high school? A program where a student takes part of his work with the remainder of the student body? A residential school--perhaps? To what extent should these programs be terminal? What is a desirable class size? At what age and/or grade level should these programs begin? There are many more such questions.

These questions would suggest that program development personnel must begin their work with pilot, development, or experimental programs with careful evaluation procedures built in. Each state must attack its own unique problems, experiment, evaluate, modify, and share the results with fellow program developers.

Although specific program guidelines are beyond the scope of this report, several general guidelines to assist program developers follow:

a. Become familiar with the characteristics (value systems, learning styles, life styles, etc.) of the people you are to serve. For example, if you are planning programs for a depressed rural area, your students will no doubt need instruction in the opportunities of the world of work as well as skill training.
b. Programs must incorporate the services of many specialists-reading, medical, counselor, speech, welfare, etc. Educational programs are only one of the needs of disadvantaged youth and adults.
c. Program content must emphasize the practical significance of education.
d. Program content, no matter how elementary, must be presented in a mature style to be congruent with the adult self-concept of disadvantaged youth.
e. Program content must be geared to the slower, more concrete learning style of persons with special needs.

f. The program must have a built-in system of immediate rewards.
g. When basic academic work is part of the special needs programs, the content should be correlated with the student's vocational program.
h. Programs must be flexible. When a student is capable of succeeding in a regular ongoing program, he should be promoted.
i. Actively involve all faculty and administrative personnel in special needs programs. Each will have a valuable contribution to make as well as promoting acceptance of the programs.
j. Parental support is necessary and can be secured through frequent communication and demonstration of a sincere interest in their problems. Utilize their leadership and organizational potentials--especially in securing community support, another essential quality for successful programs for persons with special needs.
k. A work-study program, functioning concurrently with programs for persons with special needs, reinforces the objectives of the latter program.

Work-study:

(1) Is congruent with the adult-self-concept of youth with special needs (i. e., work is part of the status of adult)
(2) Provides economic assistance--school clothes, school activities, etc.
(3) Appeals to the materialistic, pragmatic-practical aspects of the value system of persons with special needs.
(4) Provides immediate reinforcement (gratification) in two ways:

    (a) Economically, by providing needed income
    (b) Pragmatically, by reinforcing the practical significance of education

(5) Changes a system in which they have constantly known failure.
(6) Cannot be replaced by work-cooperative programs, for persons with special needs often lack the work competencies and social skills necessary for participation in work-cooperative programs.